



Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

NEWS

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Elk Shoulder Season Generates Lots of Interest

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Right now, it seems every elk hunter in Montana and beyond who did not get his, or her, elk in the general season that ended Nov. 29 has focused on four hunting districts between Great Falls and White Sulphur Springs that are taking part in the new elk shoulder season.

“Our phone lines have been jammed with hunters looking for information,” said Gary Bertellotti, Fish, Wildlife and Parks Region 4 supervisor. “At times all our lines are tied up.”

A pilot program, the shoulder season for antlerless elk runs Nov. 30 through Feb. 15 in hunting districts 445, 446, 452 and 449. A similar antlerless elk season in HD 410 is Jan. 1 to Feb. 15.

For all these districts, hunting is allowed only on private lands, federal Bureau of Land Management lands and state of Montana school trust lands. No elk shoulder seasons will occur on national forest lands, the Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Refuge or any FWP wildlife management areas.

For a complete list of the rules and regulations visit the FWP website: <http://fwp.mt.gov/>

FWP has also hired hunt coordinators to help hunters and landowners.

“The hunt coordinators gather information from landowners on an ongoing basis regarding their need, or not, for hunters and distribution of elk in their area,” Bertellotti said.

“They will provide information to hunters when possible to try to connect hunters with access and elk.”

Because of the high interest in the season, phone lines have been overwhelmed at times leading some hunters to express frustration.

“People should refer to our website first for information,” Bertellotti said. “Also remember that this is a two and half month opportunity. Things will slow down as far as calls to coordinators and the opportunity to get information from them.”

Prospective hunters should be aware that the hunts may not be easy, especially for those who are not familiar with the area, Bertellotti said. The majority of access and retrieval will be walk in only.

“People should not have unrealistic expectations,” Bertellotti said. “This is not a game damage hunt. At times this will be an arduous hunt.”